

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-41, 43-100, and 102-109 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-3, 6, 9-13, 16, 21-37, 40-41, 43-46, 49-100, and 102-109 are amended and Claims 42 and 101 are canceled without prejudice by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, the specification was objected to; Claims 2, 5, 12, 25, 26, 30, 35, 42, 44, 50, 52, 56, 67, 69, 79, 92, 94, 101, 103, and 109 were objected to; Claims 1, 11, 25, 26, 30, 34, 43, 50, 51, 55, 67, 68, 78, 92, 93, 102, and 109 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; and Claims 1-109 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Narasimhan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,446,192, herein "Narasimhan") in view of Mankude et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,748,437, herein "Mankude").

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of an interview extended to Applicants' representative on March 23, 2005. During the interview differences between the claims and the applied art were discussed. Further, claim amendments clarifying the claims over the applied art were discussed. The present response sets forth those discussed claim amendments. The Examiner indicated that he would further review the amended claims in view of a filed response. Arguments presented during the interview are reiterated below.

Regarding the objection to the specification, the specification has been amended as suggested in the outstanding Office Action. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested this objection be withdrawn.

Regarding the objection to the claims, Claims 42 and 101 are canceled, Claim 2 is amended to end with a period, Claims 2, 5, 12, 25, 26, 30, 35, 44, 50, 52, 56, 67, 69, 79, 92, 94, 103, and 109 are amended to omit the objected word "transmissively," and Claim 51 is amended to replace the word "send" with the word "sent" as suggested in the outstanding

Office Action. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested this objection be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of Claims 1, 11, 25, 26, 30, 34, 43, 50, 51, 55, 67, 68, 78, 92, 93, 102, and 109 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, these claims are amended to clarify that related information is not collected from a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus. No new matter is believed to be added. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-109 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Narasimhan in view of Mankude. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claims 1, 11, 25, 26, 30, 34, 43, 50, 51, 55, 67, 68, 78, 92, 93, 102, and 109 are amended to more clearly recite that “related information [is collected] from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus.” The claim amendments find support in the specification at page 22, line 19, to page 23, line 14. No new matter has been added.

Briefly recapitulating, independent Claim 1 is directed to a remote control system that includes a central control system and an information collection unit. The remote control system controls a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups including at least an image forming apparatus. The information collection unit collects related information from all the plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when apparatus information received from the initiating apparatus of the plurality of apparatuses is received by the central control system. Independent Claims 11, 25, 26, 30, 34, 43, 50, 51, 55, 67, 68, 78, 92, 93, 102, and 109 are amended similar to Claim 1.

In a non-limiting example, Figures 1 and 2 show the remote control system S including a central control system 1 and an information collection unit 59a and 59b.

As disclosed in the specification at page 22, line 19, to page 24, line 9, the remote control system of Claim 1 is capable among other things of collecting related information from a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups, except a group from which the remote control system received apparatus information including, for example, pre-maintenance information. Based on the received information from the initiating apparatus and related information from the plurality of apparatuses, the remote control system is capable to dispatch one engineer to the initiating apparatus and any other apparatus that requires maintenance, thus saving time and work force.

As also discussed in the specification at page 3, lines 1-21, a conventional remote control system does not take into consideration neighboring image forming devices that require pre-maintenance or any other service when one image forming device requires the assistance of an engineer, resulting in work force waste.

Turning to the applied art, Narasimhan shows in Figure 1B multiple clients 30 connected to a network 32 and able to control various devices 34. However, as discussed during the interview, Narasimhan does not teach or suggest an information collection unit of the client 30 that collects related information from all of the plurality of apparatuses 34 included in all the groups except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus that sent apparatus information to the remote control system, as required by the amended independent claims.

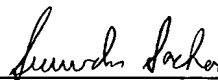
The outstanding Office Action relies on Mankude for dividing a plurality of apparatuses into a predetermined number of groups. However, Mankude does not overcome the deficiencies of Narasimhan discussed above.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 11, 25, 26, 30, 34, 43, 50, 51, 55, 67, 68, 78, 92, 93, 102, and 109 and each of the claims depending therefrom, patentably distinguish over Narasimhan and Mankude, either alone or in combination.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Registration No. 25,599
Surinder Sachar
Registration No. 34,423
Attorneys of Record

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)
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